

KADOK

NGAI-268

Subject: REDSOX/AECCB - Biography for CAMUSO 3

1. The following is a translation of the biography for CAMUSO 3.

I am 35 years old, born in the Abrene district; the town Kaceni (north-east Latgale). My father was born in the Cesis district, the town Jaunpiebalga. His father's brothers had moved to Latgale in 1860, where they bought land and set up a water mill. My father completed the secondary school when he was 16 years old in Cesis, and wanted thereafter to study forestry in St. Petersburg. But his uncles, all three of whom were bachelors, wanted him to stay with them and promised to leave him the whole inheritance. So my father, at the request of his mother, went to Latgale and lived at first as a worker for his uncles. Later, as they got older, the complete management of the mill was left in his hands. When all three uncles had died, the land and the mill became the property of my father. My father was married to a Latvian who had also come from Vidzeme -- there was a whole colony of such people.

The oldest child in our family was my sister Anna, who committed suicide after she had completed the gymnasium. She was born in 1907.

The next oldest was my brother Voldemars, born 1909. When he attended agricultural school for two years, he left it, saying that he had not chosen the right career. But later he had a sad career. He met with friends who liked night life and forgot what he really wanted to become. After the death of my father in 1931, he took over the management of the mill. He now had everything in his hands, but he neglected the mill while out entertaining himself with his friends. In 1938 he married, choosing a wife from rich Russian circles. He died with a year and a half of pleurisy and his wife returned to her parents.

The next was my brother Janis, born in 1913. After he had completed elementary school he entered the first or second gymnasium in Riga. A few months later he secretly left the school and boarded a ship. Father wanted to disinherit him for this reason, but my brother was not intimidated and didn't return home. When he entered naval school, father saw that he couldn't be dissuaded from his purpose and again gave him material support. He completed the naval school as second-best and sailed on various ships as first helmsman. In 1943 he was mobilized by the Germans and put in the navy. I don't know anything further about what happened to him.

My sister Austra was born in 1915. She completed the gymnasium in the city of Balvi and studied chemistry for three years in the pharmaceutical department. She is married. Her husband also studied and had not completed the mathematics faculty. He came from a Latgalian farm and always suffered material difficulties. Both of them now live with their daughter in the USA.

I did not get along so well with my brothers as with my sister, since there wasn't so great a difference between her age and mine, I always spent my time in childhood with her and that brought us very close together. Her letters from the USA are still full of sadness over my unsuccessful life and express regret that I am not there.

I was the youngest child, the "little end", as I was called, although I was as tall as I was broad. My first memories are of my mother's being taken to the cemetery

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and that I was angry that the people were taking my mother away. Then I remember that that father married the second time. My step-mother had fled from the Dagestan district during the war and she stayed in our house, at that time as a maid. She was very industrious and had a good character. My father valued people only according to their attributes and not their position, and therefore he married a woman without country or property.

Our step-mother did not interfere with our upbringing. We had a nurse. When she could do nothing with us, father took over, and that was bad because he was very strict. Since I was the naughtiest, I got a thrashing every other day or had to stand a few hours in the corner.

Then came elementary school. It was 17 km. from our house, so that I was away from home a whole week. The school also had a boarding section, but my father didn't want me to stay there overnight and I stayed with my aunt - my father's sister - who was a teacher in this school. On the first day I got into a fight with a boy in the fifth grade and became known as a brawler. This reputation stayed with me through all the elementary school - six years, and it didn't help when I tried to behave myself in an orderly manner. I didn't like studying. The only lesson that I liked was history. A war invalid taught the subject, a former Lieutenant Col. who expressed himself simply and clearly. It was enough for me to listen, and I didn't think about studying in books in the evening. I didn't like to have to answer to a teacher when I didn't feel like it, but when I was in the mood, I liked to recite whether I knew anything about the subject or not. I got along very badly with the teachers, especially with my aunt. My only friend was the old colonel. He always defended me when I got into difficulties. For instance, I liked very much to swim. Not far from the school was a lake about 1 km. wide. It was forbidden to swim in it. But one time I swam across it and someone saw me and I was given one number less for behaviour. I didn't have any real friends. If I did have any at all, they were only those who were the same as I; those who were otherwise didn't please me. I went home every Saturday afternoon. When the road was bad, father did not send a horse and I was supposed to stay with my aunt, but I never stayed and went home on foot. I wanted to be at home and to hear was saying to the mill employees at the bath and at meals. Then I used to sneak into the young employees' room and try to be like them. I used to have a small drink with them, and we played cards and talked "smart". Of course, we had to be careful about father, since everyone respected and feared him. One summer, when I had completed the fifth grade, I secretly went to a ball where I drank and later went to a woman's room, and didn't come home until the next morning. Then father didn't thrash me, he flogged me. Then I ran away from home, stayed two days and a night in the woods, until I was found and asked to apologize to my father. That was the extent of my punishment.

When I had completed elementary school I did not know in which school I should continue. I wanted to stay at home and work in the mill. I was happy there, but I didn't like farm work and I always avoided it. Father wanted me to go to the trade school. I obeyed him and entered the state trade school in Cesis, to study to be a mechanic. It was the same for me as in elementary school. The studying and the routine work didn't please me and the teachers didn't like me. I happened to join a national organization (the Parkonkrusts), that was later prohibited, but I was expelled from the school because I had been a casual member, not having completed the second grade. Then I lived at home and did nothing. My father had already died and the other brother who was not manager had no respect for me -- we were pretty foreign to each other. He liked to play cards, but, after an incident in Cesis, I never took cards in my hand.

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We kept company with our so-called "aristocrats", that is with the border defense officers, former Russian landowners and clergy. They often spent nights together and drank. My brother had blindly turned over the management of the mill to a foreman. When I once told my brother that the manager should be fired, because he was taking great liberties, my brother was angry and said, as usual, that it was none of my affair. Through boredom I looked for friends with whom I could drink and have a good time. There was no lack of friends, and they came from various social classes. It was completely the same to me, if they were thieves or angels, if they did things with me. My brother's friends were displeased, but the simple people looked on me as a little God. At festivities where only the upper classes took part I behaved like a simple farmer, drank Schnapps from teaglasses, and so forth, but of course only when the festivities were held among acquaintances.

So it went until I was called into compulsory military service. This was difficult for me, because I was a person who obeyed no one. With displeasure and without eagerness, I finished the NCO's school as lowest man. I was furloughed in the grade of Cpl., to which I had finally been raised. This time was for me the first difficulty in my short life. (Served in 1938-39 in Kurzeme Artillery Regiment in Liepaja, according to PRQ).

After the military service I lived at home again and everything went as before.

After the Communists moved in in 1940 one border guard after another disappeared. Later the border was abolished. My brother died at the end of the year and I took over management of the mill. The communists became interested in the mill and it was nationalized in February 1941. I was put out of the house, not being allowed to take anything with me. I was also not allowed to leave the township. I went to the townhall to try to get a permit to leave. There I was told that they would get me a job in the township, but they didn't say what kind. I said, "Thanks, but I'll work where I can make the choice myself," and went out. A car drove up as I was leaving, and out stepped a Russian who had been an acquaintance of mine in elementary school. He greeted me and asked why I was so red in the face. I only smiled, for I thought that this nationalization was his handwork, because he was the new "mayor" (Izveščik). But he disputed this and asked me to go into the townhall with him where he said that he would arrange to have everything returned to me. If worse came to worst, I could be the manager-commissar in the mill. I deliberated and told him to leave things as they were; perhaps I could use his help another time. Then I went to the neighbors place, packed my things, and went off with my wife. After the Russians had come, I married the sister of one of my workers: not from love, it seems to me, but out of defence. There was no girl in the neighborhood who did not want to become my wife -- I got them all into my power easily -- but this one was different, and therefore I married her. I sent her to Jumiebalga and went on to Riga. There I registered (at the housing registration office of the militia) and found work in a factory in Gaujasiela. I worked there barely two weeks, and then the time-keeper told me confidentially that it would be better if I left the factory. I unobtrusively left on the afternoon of the same day. I did not stay where I was living and told the proprietress that I was going to the country for a few days. From then on I lived with acquaintances. I found work in the port as a stevedore. It was comparatively safe there, since the workers had not yet been organized into brigades. In the morning I would register with the foreman under a false name and work until the ship was loaded. Then I was paid and looked around for the next job. I worked thus until the outbreak of the war, (June 21, 1941.)

After the Germans entered Riga (July 1, 1941), I worked as a policeman in Riga from July 1 to the 15th of August, at which time I returned home. The house had been plundered, no doors were left on it, and even the hens had disappeared. But the mill was in comparatively good shape and work could soon be started again. There were many Russian partisans in our neighborhood who were very active, especially in 1944. One of the mills had already been burned down by the partisans and I received threatening letters saying that I would suffer reprisal if I took any further part in trying to clear the woods of partisans.

In 1943 the Germans started mobilization in Latvia. Since my mill also put out grain for the army, I and my workers were excused from service.

On July 21, 1944, as the front disintegrated, I left the house. I joined a so-called partisan group that was being formed by the Germans in Dzerbene, the Cesis district. Later this group was trained in Courland and then transferred to Germany. From there, after various "swindles" on the part of the German leadership, we were dropped behind the Russian front in Pomorania and western Poland. Of about 160 men, only 11 returned and nothing is known about the rest. A single group of six men was dropped in Latvia, the Ludza district in January 1945, but this was destroyed in one month.

After the capitulation, on May 3, 1945, I was a prisoner of war. I was released on May 10, 1946. I lived in a DP camp until the end of the year. In December 1946 I joined the newly formed Latvian guard company and stayed in it three years.

In 1948 I received letters from acquaintances in Latvia. My wife was living in Riga and re-married. The mill had not been destroyed and a commissar was managing it. The friend from my childhood was in Riga in an important office and had asked why I didn't come home.

In December 1949, I resigned from the guard company, since it had already been six months since I had turned in documents for emigration to the USA. Then emigration of former soldiers came to an end. I lived in a DP camp in Augsburg and somehow came to know a person who drew me into this matter. Then I abandoned the idea of emigrating.

The last will be the first!

2. The following are supplementary questions asked of CAMUSO 3. Section A.

1. I was baptized evangelist-Lutheran. I believe in God. The number of times I go to church depends on the circumstances. There have been years when I went two or four times, and others when I didn't go at all.

2. First of all I fear a disease that would make me a burden to my relatives or to society. I am also afraid of the Cheka.

3. I don't have any personal enemies that I would like to shoot, except for those who are responsible for the murder of my friends and countrymen. I shall find them when I return to Latvia.

4. It seems to me that one person who knows about my fate is buried in Augsburg. The mother of my son knows that I work for the Americans, which is certainly also known by some of my countrymen in Augsburg. I don't think that they know of it kind of work it is. (His cover is that he works for Americans).

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3. When, in 1940, on the night of the 16th or 17th of June, the Russians burned down the border guard house, I knew that this could have serious consequences. From a pine near our house one could see far behind the Russian border. At 5 to 10 km. from the border Russian forces were assembled. The matter was clear to me. The beginning of the occupation was very quiet where we were. The border guards remained in their positions, and it was only in the town administration and in the police that changes were made. In my mill everything remained as before. The newspapers wrote that small businesses would not be nationalized. Then came the parliamentary elections. At our poll election leaflets with the heading "All for Latvia" (from number 3) were handed out. Later at a dance, when the local commissioner whispered in my ear that I should not willfully run my head against a wall, I wondered why I had not already been arrested, as the Communists had such good information. It went this way until October, when the border guard was liquidated and some arrested. My mill was now also controlled, but very decently. There was no direct intervention in the management. Then, in February 1941, without warning, the local Communists came and nationalized the mill, along with the land and the inventory. I had to leave the house the same day. The next day I went to community's executive committee and asked for a travel permit. This was refused me and for that reason I figured that the "gentlemen", after the nationalization, intended to have me go only to where it pleased them.

4. In Riga, I had two things to attend to, namely to register and to find work. This would have been simple if I had had a travel permit. Fortunately my passport erroneously gave Riga as my last place of residence (I had been in Riga two years before). So I got work as a fitter in the Metalworking Factory. I had to fill out a lengthy questionnaire before getting the job. I gave my correct name, but I said that I came from the proletariat. Then the director gave me a card saying that I work there and that I want to change my place of residence. I went to the militia with this card, and registered my new address. The card stayed with the militia. I did not receive any other certificates from the factory.

I don't remember how much I earned, probably 120 rubles, since I didn't work a full 2 weeks and left without having been paid. Thereafter I lived as usual illegally. When passports had to be exchanged for new ones, I had not done so. I did not receive any certificates when I worked in the harbor. It sufficed if one knew the group leader, and the name of the boat then he was to load or unload. It would not have lasted so long if work brigades had been organized in the harbor as then the control over the workers would have been stricter. The pay varied a lot, since it was piece work. We were not paid less than 10 rubles for 8 hours.

I did not belong to any organization or sport group during the Russian occupation.

5. I know Latgale fairly well, from North Latgale to Rēzekne, since I was born there and lived there most of my life. I also know Vidzeme: the area around Cēsis, where I went to school; also the Valmiera district-Smiltene-Ilkums to the south as far as Rēzekne-Krustpils, as far as the Daugava, since I travelled there a lot.

6. I know only a few communities in Zemgale and Kurzeme. I know Riga very well, and to a lesser degree Liepāja and Daugavpils. I would prefer to be in Latgale, especially in the northern part. It could also be in the coast district, which I know well and where I hope to find a house with a garden. My ideal is a small village.

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8. During the early part of the Communist occupation, there was a so-called industrial combine in each district, which collected money from all the nationalist industries, issued permits for the purchase of various goods, and so forth. It also had the responsibility of controlling enterprises, to see that the state, the workers, and the people did not perpetrate any frauds, that all safety measures for workers were observed, and various other things. The district industrial combines were under the province combines and also directly under the Riga administration of industrial combines. The district combines were also called raion, for instance, the industrial raion of Rēsele, and so forth. I think that an official who worked in such a raion or combine had many advantages. He is free to go where he pleases. Since the commissioners in the small communities have generally only completed the grammar school, they almost lose their ability to speak when an auditing comes. I know the workings of a mill and a saw mill and other businesses, and therefore I think that this would be a good occupation for me. I don't know of any other occupation in which I would feel completely certain of myself.

9. It is hard for me to say what kind of assignment it would be best to give me, since I have never done this kind of work before. Perhaps I could organize a small resistance group after making contact with the local partisans. I really don't know what would be best, but I am ready for any kind of assignment.

10. I don't know what could attract me so strongly that I could be completely devoted to it. For short periods of time I can be carried away by various things: alcohol, women, beer, one sport or another, movies, and so forth, but I don't say what I like the best. For this reason I'll try anything occasionally, since life is so short.

11. It depends on how much is accomplished and how strong I am mentally and physically. If I come with sound nerves, and body, (meaning if I come back with sound nerves and body) I would return for a second time after a short rest, either as a man in a unit, and not as a false being.

12. There should be no delay; what is to be done must be taken care of before it is too late. The quickest victory will be won if we begin at exactly the right time, and not a minute too early or too late. And the people at the top must know this time.

Section D:

1. As is done by all occupation authorities, the Germans select representatives of the people and put them in office - they are not elected. There, like then, the authority, and each uses it in another manner. The police the people first picks himself. Who has no power concerning the people and who is only concerned with himself, of course gets ahead, even if it is better than the others. A Latvian that was a high official in the industrial district. During the time of the Bolsheviks, he wanted to learn his position. He was, however, asked by the Germans not to do this, since he had no time to do this. He was, however, asked to go and work for his people, and when the Germans came, he was asked to go and work for his people. The situation is different now, and the people should know the time to the people. The situation, to the people, is different now, and the people should know the time to the people. The situation, to the people, is different now, and the people should know the time to the people.

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2. It is different with the Latvians who were not with the Germans. Those who betrayed their country to the Germans were just running it. These Latvian directors general who were set up by the Germans are a different matter, since it has already been proved in court that they did all they could to make the burden of the occupation easier.

3. The Umanis government was needed, because otherwise the left or the right extremists would have tried to overthrow the government. Since the Umanis party (the former party) was more right-wing, it should have worked together with other like-minded parties (which it did not do) and to put up a strong fight against the left, since we were too close to Russia. In states that are far from the Soviet Union one can deal lightly with parties of the left, because they are not so seriously threatened by the Red pest. Umanis should also have taxed the rich farmers more heavily and raised the living standards of industrial external policies, for instance he could have established closer contact with the U.S.

4. The old politicians have already lived beyond their time. They have not done anything good for Latvia and should stand aside.

5. Here are the same old politicians who cause confusion among the emigrants. They will not keep quiet, since they have lost their careers and have no more to loose, and therefore they live in the hope that they will perhaps still be something, I do not think so. So they are trying to prevent unity among us, and in part they are successful.

6. I believe it is Zarins, because he has full power. I don't know whether he is more capable than others, for instance, Valdemis, but I think so.

7. General Beris could be the military authority, if he were still alive, since he was in the Latvian Army and loved the people. The second is Col. Jansons. He is less well known to the people, but the emigrants and the legionnaires of the 2nd World War know him well. A capable soldier.

8. It would be good for the political situation in Latvia that there be a military government for a few years following the liberation. Then a parliamentary government, a president elected by the people, who would even have complete authority in individual cases.